

Frequently Asked Questions – Georgia Department of Agriculture (GDA) Licensing Division

1. Is the Licensing Division new?

A: Yes. On May 1, 2013, the Georgia Department of Agriculture consolidated the issuance of licenses into a single Division to better serve our customers. The licensing team includes a Division Director, IT Specialist, and seven licensing coordinators that represent all of the Department's Operation Divisions (Animal Industry, Food Safety, Marketing, Plant Industry and Fuel & Measures).

2. Who do I contact regarding the payment of license fees and the issuing of licenses?

A: Please contact the GDA Customer Service Center at 404-586-1411 or 855-4-AG-LICENSE (855-424-5423)-Toll Free. One of our customer services team members will assist you with your questions. You may also email your questions to gdalicensing@agr.georgia.gov.

3. Who do I contact if I have a question about the requirements for a particular license or need to schedule an inspection?

A: You may contact the Georgia Department of Agriculture's Customer Service Center either by phone (404-586-1411 or 855-4-AG-LICENSE (855-424-5423)-Toll Free) or also by email at gdalicensing@agr.georgia.gov.

For regulatory questions, you may contact the GDA Operations Division that regulates your license type. A listing of the Operation Divisions is found at <http://agr.georgia.gov/divisions.aspx>.

- Animal Industry Division - (404) 656-3671
- Food Safety Division - (404) 656-3627
- Marketing Division - (404) 656-3368
- Plant Industry Division
 - Ag Inputs – (404) 656-4958
 - Plant Protections – (404) 586-1140
 - Structural Pest – (404) 656-3641
- Fuel & Measures Division - (404) 656-3605

4. What is the main goal of the new Licensing Division in its first year?

A: Improving the online experience will allow customers easy access to licenses, as well as being customer friendly, efficient and a more transparent government. Our goal is to process & renew 50% of GDA licenses online this year. By the end of the calendar year 2013, all agricultural licenses will be available online.

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5. Will my license renewal process change?

A: Yes, GDA is required by O.C.G.A. § 50-36-1 to verify citizenship/immigration status for public benefits issued. Public benefits are defined in the law as certifications, licenses, registrations, state grant, etc. All new and renewal licenses are required to complete a notarized affidavit and provide one form of acceptable documentation as defined in O.C.G.A. § 50-36-1. The department will implement this change online no later than July 1, 2013. As directed by law, GDA will utilize the Federal Systematic Alien Verification for Entitlements (SAVE) program operated by the United States Department of Homeland Security.

6. What documents are acceptable for the Secure & Verification (S&V) process?

A: Choose one:

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• U.S. Passport• U.S. Military I.D• Driver's License<ul style="list-style-type: none">– Issued by:<ul style="list-style-type: none">• U.S. State• District of Columbia• Puerto Rico• Guam• Northern Marianas Islands• Virgin Islands• American Samoa• Swain Islands• Tribal Identification<ul style="list-style-type: none">– Federally Recognized Native American tribe | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Permanent Resident Card<ul style="list-style-type: none">– Green Card• Employment Authorization Document<ul style="list-style-type: none">– VISA• Passport Issued by a Foreign Government• Merchant Mariner Document<ul style="list-style-type: none">– Issued by U.S. Coast Guard• Canadian Driver's License• Certificate of Citizenship<ul style="list-style-type: none">– Issued by U.S. Dept. of Citizenship & Immigration Services• Birth Certificate<ul style="list-style-type: none">– Issued by U.S. Dept. of State |
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7. Does it matter what type of file I upload (jpeg, PDF, Word doc, etc.)?

A: We can accept all types of files. The only time an item is rejected is if a representative cannot view the document or if the document is incomplete when submitted.

8. Will the Verification of Citizenship requirements slow down the process of obtaining my license?

A: The process for new and renewal licenses will be delayed slightly during the first year because of the change in the issuance and renewal process. The Licensing and Customer

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Service Center team members are committed to providing exceptional customer service during the process.

9. How will this new process affect late fees?

A: Late fees will be waived for at least a 90-day period from your new due date, in an effort to assist customers with the new changes in the licensing process.

10. How long will it take for my documents to be approved? When should I expect a response from GDA?

A: An approval email will be submitted to you automatically once the document is reviewed. This should happen within one business day.

11. I was notified that my citizenship/immigration status could not be verified in accordance with O.C.G.A. § 50-36-1. How can I appeal this decision?

A: GDA utilizes the Federal Systematic Alien Verification for Entitlements (SAVE) program operated by the United States Department of Homeland Security for citizenship/immigration status. In order to reconcile a denied status, please contact a U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Service field office.

To visit the Georgia field office click <http://www.uscis.gov/portal/site/uscis>

To find your local field office click the following link: <http://www.uscis.gov>

The National Customer Service Center number is: 1-800-375-5283

12. I don't have access to a scanner, what other options do I have to submit this information?

A: You may mail or fax your affidavit and a copy of your authorized documentation to our customer service center for upload. The Licensing Division fax number is 404-586-1126.

13. I am uploading sensitive information, IS MY INFORMATION SECURE?

A: Yes, when you login, you will go to a HTTPS: page (using SSL encryption), which is the same security used for credit card payments. Documents are housed on servers in a secure facility with biometric access, and user/passwords required for downloading any documents.

14. Is the affidavit the same for individuals and companies?

A: Yes, the affidavit can be used to verify both individual applicants and companies. The affidavit is a form issued by the GEORGIA DEPARTMENT OF AUDITS AND ACCOUNTS in order for applicants of a public benefit to prove that they are legal residents of the United States or have authorization via green card, etc. to legally operate within the United States.

15. Who is the designee for the Safe and Verifiable process with regards to companies?

A: It is the company's decision to determine who the designee will be for S&V process.

16. Where can I get my affidavit notarized?

- Contact your local town or city hall.
- Visit an official court near your location.
- Check your banking or financial institution.
- Research your local notary options online.
- Contact your insurance company to determine if it has a notary you can use.

17. What if I do not have internet access and have no way of uploading the required SAVE documents?

A: Please contact the GDA Customer Service Center at 404-586-1411 or 855-4-AG-LICENSE (855-424-5423)-Toll Free. One of our customer service team members will gladly assist you.

18. What are my payment options for my license?

A: Online credit card and ACH transactions are accepted. Payment by check, money order or certified check is accepted by mail with the invoice return coupon. GDA no longer accepts cash.

19. I do not have an email address. Am I required to have one in order to complete the online license & secure verification process?

A: Yes. There are several options for free email addresses available to customers (Google mail, Yahoo mail, etc.).

20. Is there a way to utilize the data from Public Safety/Driver Services for the secure & verification documents?

A: There is not currently a way to utilize data from other state agencies at this time. S&V documents will have to be submitted directly to the Georgia Department of Agriculture.

21. Will the S&V documents have to be done every time a license is renewed?

A: No, pursuant to O.C.G.A. § 50-36-1, S&V documents will only need to be submitted one time. Companies will only have to resubmit when their respected ownership changes.

22. What is the difference between renewing online and mailing the renewal?

A: Renewing online is more efficient and, in some cases, allows you to print your own license/certification; however the department offers multiple options for your convenience.

23. Will there be a training program to help teach the industry how to properly download and upload documents and what is required?

A: Any person needing assistance with S&V documents, new licenses, and renewals can call the Customer Service Center at 404-586-1411 or 855-4-AG-LICENSE (855-424-5423)-Toll Free. One of our customer service team members will assist you with your questions. You may also email your questions to gdalicensing@agr.georgia.gov.

24. Where can I find additional information regarding O.C.G.A. § 50-36-1 (Verification of Lawful Presence within United States)?

A: Additional information can be found at:

Dept. of Homeland Security (SAVE Program) - <http://www.uscis.gov/>

Georgia Attorney General Office - <http://law.ga.gov/>

Georgia Dept. of Agriculture - <http://agr.georgia.gov/>

Georgia Dept. of Audits and Accounts - <http://www.audits.ga.gov/>

25. How can I file an appeal with the State or find additional information?

A: Section 20 of House Bill 87 creates a new Code section, O.C.G.A. §50-36-3, which establishes the Immigration Enforcement Review Board. O.C.G.A. §50-36-3(d) specifies the duties of the Board, as follows:

(1) To conduct a review or investigation of any complaint properly filed with the board

(2) To take such remedial action deemed appropriate in response to complaints filed with the board, including holding hearings and considering evidence;

(3) To make and adopt rules and regulations consistent with the provisions of this Code section; and

(4) To subpoena relevant documents and witnesses and to place witnesses under oath for the provision of testimony in matters before the board.

O.C.G.A. §50-36-3(e) states “The board shall have the authority to investigate and review any complaint with respect to all actions of a public agency or employee alleged to have violated or failed to properly enforce the provisions of Code section 13-10-91,

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36-80-23, or 50-36-1 with which such public agency or employee was required to comply. Complaints may be received from any legal resident of this state as defined by Code Section 40-2-1 who is also a legally registered voter. The method and grounds for filing a complaint shall be posted on the Department of Audits and (Accounts') website."

The method and grounds for filing a complaint can be found in the Official Board Rules at http://www.audits.ga.gov/NALGAD/Files/IERB_rules.pdf

The complaint form can be downloaded at:
http://www.audits.ga.gov/NALGAD/Files/IERB_Complaint_form.pdf.

26. I am a current GATE Card holder; will I have to participate in the Safe and Verifiable process?

A: Yes. If you are a current GATE Card holder you will have to submit one form of acceptable documentation and the notarized affidavit upon your next renewal period which is scheduled to begin October 15th.

We, at the Georgia Department of Agriculture, take our responsibilities to you very seriously and are committed to providing superior agricultural products, service and leadership.

The **mission** of the Georgia Department of Agriculture's Licensing Division is to provide exceptional customer service using available technology to issue and renew licenses, certifications & registrations expeditiously.

The **vision** of the Licensing Division is to provide a transparent and efficient methodology enabling our customers to easily engage the Georgia Department of Agriculture by fulfilling our customer's business needs.

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